

**Bethel United Church Order of Service  
March 23, 2025 – Lent 3**



**Introit**

**Welcome & Announcements**

Good morning and welcome to Bethel United Church in Rideau Ferry, Ontario. Today is March 23<sup>rd</sup>, the third Sunday in Lent. We welcome all of you into this place, whether you are worshiping with us in our sanctuary, or from home through our Live Streaming.

This week, our service is being led by: Ruth Anne Johnson and our choir, Aidan Williamson, Kathleen Williamson and Sandra Hanna.

A quick reminder of our regularly scheduled Bethel activities: Chat and Chew on Tuesdays at 1:30 and our Zoom Prayer and Share at 10am on Thursdays.

If you have any questions about our weekly activities, you can access the calendar on our website: [www.bethelchurchrideauferry.ca](http://www.bethelchurchrideauferry.ca).

The calendar will appear on the first screen and has all of our activities listed.

The UCW and the Stewardship Committee's 2025 Lenten Project continues.

Our Lenten Project aims to raise awareness about the work of the Perth and Smiths Falls District Hospital (PSFDH) Foundation and provide support for the Foundation's current campaign to raise money for the purchase of a new cataract microscope for the Hospital.

The Hospital Foundation relies on community donations to fund critical equipment and technology so that the physicians and staff can provide the best care close to home. **They raise funds for PSFDH because the Ontario government does NOT pay for equipment for hospitals.** This includes equipment such as patient beds, IV pumps, MRI machines and other vital components of a thriving hospital **including a cataract microscope.**

**Ready for Pancakes?**

The Bethel 2025 Pancake Breakfast will take place on Saturday, April 5<sup>th</sup> from 8 - 11 a.m. (Ontario Maple Weekend). As always, much help will be needed to promote and carry out this special community activity. Please spread the word amongst family and friends about this upcoming and always popular event. Thank you to everyone who has signed up to help that morning. What a great team you are! We will again be partnering with Oliver's Mapleworks and serving their delicious maple syrup.

Are there any birthdays or other celebrations this week? Where have you seen God at work this week?

Please join in singing a brief song of celebration:

**VU 958**

**“Halle, Halle, Halle”**

**Halle, halle, halle-lujah! Halle, halle, halle-lujah!**

**Halle, halle, halle-lujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah!**

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### **Land Acknowledgment (Unison)**

***For thousands of years, First Nations people have walked on this land; their relationship with the land is at the centre of their lives and spirituality. We are gathered on the traditional territory of the Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee Peoples and acknowledge their stewardship of this land throughout the ages.***

### **Mission and Service Story**

#### ***Springtime of the Spirit***

First come the tiny snowdrops, bravely peeking out over the melting snow. Then, the crocuses with their delicate purple petals, followed by the buttery-yellow daffodils. By the time I’m bundling up for Easter service, tulips in every colour of Joseph’s splendid coat are blooming.

Spring reminds us of renewal, of hope, of life returning. And in this Easter season, I see that same renewal in the Mission and Service work that your generosity makes possible.

Because of you, Mission and Service partners are like the first flowers of spring—blooming where they are needed most. Your compassion takes root and becomes warmth and care for those in crisis, hope for those facing hardship, and new possibilities for communities near and far.

Like the crocuses and tulips, our shared ministry blossoms in many forms, responding to the needs of different communities in the ways that will help most. Your support makes this possible, and for that, we are deeply grateful.

This Easter, may you be like the first flowers of spring—vibrant, alive, and bringing joy to those around you. In this time of renewal, know that your generosity through Mission and Service will help even more seeds of hope take root and grow. Thank you.

### **Call to Worship (Responsive)**

Come, all who are thirsty says Jesus, our Lord,

**come, all who are weak, taste the living water  
that I shall give.**

Dip your hands in the stream, refresh body and soul,

**drink from it, depend on it,**

for this water will never run dry.

**Come, all who are thirsty says Jesus, our Lord.**

### **Lighting of the Christ Candle and the World Candle**

Today as we light our Christ Candle and our World Candle, we continue on our walk to the cross, and from there to the empty grave. We live in anticipation of the Risen Christ.

*A moment of self-reflection:* Do we ever wonder what happened to Judas after his death? Do we believe in a God of mercy?

In the Letter to the Ephesians, it says "But God was merciful! We were dead because of our sins, but God loved us so much he made us alive with Christ, and God's gift of undeserved grace is what saves you."

### **Opening Prayer (Unison)**

***God of love, when you gave yourself to us in Jesus the Christ, so may we give ourselves to you, living according to your holy will. Keep our feet firmly in the way where Christ leads us ; help our lips speak the truth that Christ teaches us; fill our bodies with the life that is Christ within us. In his holy name we pray. Amen.***

(Lenten Prayer – VU 110)

### **Opening Hymn      VU 112      "O God, How We Have Wandered"**

**<sup>1</sup> O God, how we have wandered and hidden from your face;  
in foolishness have squandered your legacy of grace.  
But how, in exile dwelling, we turn with fear and shame,  
as distant but compelling, you call us each by name.**

**<sup>2</sup> And now at length discerning the evil that we do,  
by faith we are returning with hope and trust in you.  
In haste you come to meet us, and home rejoicing bring,  
in gladness there to greet us with calf and robe and ring.**

**<sup>3</sup> O God of all the living, both banished and restored,  
compassionate, forgiving, our peace and hope assured.  
Grant now that our transgressing, our faithlessness may cease.  
Stretch out your hand in blessing, in pardon, and in peace.**

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## Passing the Peace

### Theme Conversation

What does the word mercy mean to you? Who gives mercy?

### Our Scriptures Today

**Psalm 51:1**

**Matthew 5:7**

**Mark 1:40-45**

### Reflection

### *Our Ministry of Mercy*

### Hymn

**MV 144**

***"Like a Healing Stream"***

1. **Like a healing stream in a barren desert,  
Spirit water bringing life to dusty earth,  
Good is trickling through our lives as in a dream unfolding,  
promising revival and rebirth...like a healing stream.**
2. **Like a gentle rain on a thirsty garden,  
Spirit water come to nourish tiny seed,  
God is bubbling through the soil to coax a new creation,  
yearning for an end to want and need...like a gentle rain.**
3. **Like a river strong with a restless current,  
Spirit water rushing on to distant shore,  
God is carving out a channel in a new direction,  
calling for an end to hate and war...like a river strong.**
4. **Like a mighty sea reaching far horizons,  
Spirit water with a love both deep and wide,  
God is working in our hearts to shape a new tomorrow:  
God will always challenge and provide!**

**Like a mighty sea, like a river strong,  
like a gentle rain, like a healing stream.**

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### Invitation to the Offering

As we come into our time of offering, we give thanks to God for the privilege of being able to share our finances, time and talents in order to build God's Kingdom here on earth.

### Offering Music

**Offering Response      VU 542      "We Give You But Your Own"**

**We give you but your own, whate'er the gift may be;  
all that we have is yours alone, we give it gratefully.**

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**Offering Prayer (Together)**

***All good gifts come from you, dear Lord, and from these riches we bring this offering. Help us to use it for the furtherance of your purpose in this place, and for the benefit of those in need. Amen.***

**Pastoral Prayer and the Lord's Prayer**

Prayer- Rev. Dave

Today, we have special prayers for:

Leona	Connie	Janet
Joy	Manfred	Chris
Helene	Rev. Lynne	Carol
Liam	Shannon	Dick
Maddi	Doreen	Grant
Joanne	Thelma	Kim
Abby	Betty	Choughik

And together as a community we pray the prayer that Jesus taught us, saying, **Our Father...**

**Closing Hymn      VU 218      "We Praise You, O God"**

**<sup>1</sup> We praise you, O God, our Redeemer, Creator;  
in grateful devotion our tribute we bring.  
We lay it before you; we kneel and adore you;  
we bless your holy name, glad praises we sing.**

**<sup>2</sup> We worship you, God of our mothers and fathers,  
through trial and tempest, companion and guide.  
When perils o'ertake us, you will not forsake us,  
but faithful to your promise, you walk by our side.**

**<sup>3</sup> With voices united our praises we offer  
and gladly our songs of thanksgiving we raise.  
Our sins now confessing, we pray for your blessing,  
to you, our great Redeemer, forever be praise!**

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## **Living Our Faith This Week**

As you go forth from this sanctuary, I ask you to be aware of wounded people and of challenging people: at work, in your family, the stranger. Show God's mercy to them in this hurting world.

## **Commissioning and Benediction**

### **Sung Benediction**

**Go now in peace, never be afraid,  
God will go with you each hour of everyday.  
Go now in faith, steadfast strong and true,  
Know God will guide you in all you do.  
Go now in love, and show you believe.  
Reach out to others, so all the world can see.  
God will be there, watching us in love.  
Go now in peace, in faith, and in love.  
Amen. Amen. Amen**

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